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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1. (original) A gas distributor, which comprises:

(a) a gas inlet;

(b) a gas outlet head in communication with the gas inlet for receiving a flow of gas from the gas inlet and having a peripheral surface;

(c) a plurality of gas outlets spaced along the peripheral surface, the gas flow exiting as a gas stream from each gas outlet;

(d) a plurality of gas deflectors, each deflector being proximate to one of the gas outlets and at least initially directing the gas stream exiting each gas outlet in at least a generally centripetal path.

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Claim 2. (original) The distributor of claim 1 wherein each deflector is an angular deflector comprising an aft component having a generally forward deflecting surface and an upper component having a generally downward deflecting surface such that the gas stream exiting each gas outlet is directed by each deflector into a curved generally centripetal, downward path.

Claim 3. (original) The distributor of claim 2 wherein each deflector has an open generally trapezoidal shape.

Claim 4. (original) The distributor of claim 3 wherein the aft component has a generally triangular shape and wherein the upper component has a generally triangular shape and wherein the forward deflecting surface and the downward deflecting surface intersect at an edge.

Claim 5. (original) The distributor of claim 1 wherein the gas outlet head is generally cylindrical and wherein the peripheral surface is generally circular.

Claim 6. (original) The distributor of claim 5 wherein the gas outlets are in the form of holes spaced along the peripheral surface and wherein the number of holes is at least 4.

Claim 7. (original) The distributor of claim 6 wherein the number of holes is in the range of from 4 to 20.

Claim 8. (original) The distributor of claim 7 wherein the number of holes is in the range from 6 to 12.

Claim 9. (original) An apparatus for vapor coating of articles with a metallic coating, which comprises:

(1) a coating container having a base, a top spaced from the base, and a side wall connecting the top and the base;

(2) a gas distributor comprising:

(a) a gas inlet;

(b) a gas outlet head in communication with the gas inlet for receiving a flow of gas from the gas inlet and having a peripheral surface;

(c) a plurality of gas outlets spaced along the peripheral surface, the gas flow exiting as a gas stream from each gas outlet;

(d) a plurality of gas deflectors, each deflector being proximate to one of the gas outlets and at least initially directing the gas stream exiting the gas outlet in at least a generally centripetal path

(3) at least one holder for each article to be coated positioned within the coating container and below the gas outlet head of the gas distributor;

(4) at least one holder for a source of the metallic coating positioned within the coating container and below the gas outlet head of the gas distributor.

Claim 10. (original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the container and the side wall are generally cylindrical.

Claim 11. (original) The apparatus of claim 10 wherein each deflector is an angular deflector comprising an aft component having a generally forward deflecting surface and an upper component having a generally downward deflecting surface such that the gas stream exiting

each gas outlet is directed by each deflector into a curved generally centripetal, downward path.

Claim 12. (original) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein each deflector has an open generally trapezoidal shape.

Claim 13. (original) The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the aft component has a generally triangular shape and wherein the upper component has a generally triangular shape and wherein the forward deflecting surface and the downward deflecting surface intersect at an edge.

Claim 14. (original) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the gas outlet head is generally cylindrical and wherein the peripheral surface is generally circular.

Claim 15. (original) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the gas outlets are in the form of holes spaced along the peripheral surface and wherein the number of holes is in the range from 4 to 20.

Claims 16-32 (withdrawn).